

War and the American Military

INTRODUCTION

War isn't an unfamiliar phenomenon in America. Our 220+ year history, although a short span of time by world standards, is filled with both internal and external conflict. Today, we can look back at that time as a period of consolidation in which America developed and employed tremendous power. As Air Force officers, we have an obligation to understand the fundamental framework of social and military science so we might become more effective in the preservation of those liberties and institutions our forefathers fought so hard to obtain.

Past performance often becomes prophecy. War is a nasty, bloody, expensive business, and it takes a terrible toll in blood and treasure. Because of international power politics and human nature, we're going to have war again. And worse than that, the way it's going to happen won't be the type of war we expect. It'll be at the worst possible time, worst possible place, against the worst possible enemy. By studying the nature of conflict we can more intelligently anticipate the future. Armed with such knowledge, hopefully we'll be able to avoid the agonies of war for our country and next generations.

STUDY ASSIGNMENT

Read the information section of this lesson.

Lesson Objective: Know the basis and characteristics of war.

Samples of Behavior:

1. State the difference between military doctrine and military strategy.
2. Define war according to AFDD-1.
3. State the three enduring truths that describe the fundamental nature of war.
4. Identify the ways war (as a multidimensional activity) can be categorized.

INFORMATION

Doctrine, Strategy, and War Doctrine Defined

Air and space doctrine is a statement of officially sanctioned beliefs and warfighting principles that describe and guide the proper use of air and space forces in military operations. It is what we have come to understand, based on our experience to date. *The Air Force promulgates and teaches this doctrine as a common frame of reference on the best way to prepare and employ air and space forces. Accordingly, air and space doctrine shapes the manner in which the Air Force organizes, trains, equips, and sustains its forces.* Doctrine prepares us for future uncertainties and, combined with our basic shared core values, *provides a common set*

of understandings on which airmen base their decisions. Doctrine consists of the fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is the linchpin of successful military operations, and *Air Force doctrine is meant to codify accumulated wisdom and provide a framework for the way we prepare for, plan, and conduct air and space operations.* In application, doctrine must be treated with judgment but must never be dismissed out of hand or through ignorance of its principles.

Air and space doctrine is an accumulation of knowledge gained primarily from the study and analysis of experience, which may include actual combat or contingency operations as well as equipment tests or exercises. As such, doctrine reflects what has usually worked best. In those less frequent instances in which experience is lacking or difficult to acquire (e.g., theater nuclear operations), doctrine may be developed through analysis of theory and postulated actions. **It must be emphasized that doctrine development is never complete.** Innovation has always been a key part of sound doctrinal development and must continue to play a central role. Doctrine is constantly changing as new experiences and advances in technology point the way to the force of the future.

Levels of Air and Space Doctrine

The Air Force places air and space doctrine at different levels and depths of detail in the forms of basic, operational, and tactical doctrine.

Basic Doctrine. **Basic doctrine states the most fundamental and enduring beliefs that describe and guide the proper use of air and space forces in military action.** *It describes the “elemental properties” of air and space power and provides the airman’s perspective.* Because of its fundamental and enduring character, basic doctrine *provides broad and continuing guidance on how Air Force forces are organized and employed.* As the foundation of all air and space doctrine, basic doctrine also sets the tone and vision for doctrine development for the future. AFDD 1 is the airman’s basic doctrine.

Operational Doctrine. **Operational doctrine, contained in AFDD 2-series publications, describes more detailed organization of air and space forces and applies the principles of basic doctrine to military actions.** Operational doctrine *guides the proper employment of air and space forces in the context of distinct objectives, force capabilities, broad functional areas, and operational environments.* Basic doctrine and operational doctrine *provide the focus for developing the missions and tasks* that must be executed through tactical doctrine.

Tactical Doctrine. **Tactical doctrine describes the proper employment of specific weapon systems individually or in concert with other weapon systems to accomplish detailed objectives.** Tactical doctrine *considers particular tactical objectives* (blockading a harbor with aerial mines) and tactical conditions (threats, weather, and terrain) and *describes how weapon systems are employed* to accomplish the tactical objective (B-1s laying sea mines at low altitude). Tactical doctrine is

codified in Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (AFTTP) 3-series manuals. (Formerly known as Multiple Command Manuals (MCM) 3-1 and 3-3 series.)

Types of Doctrine

Service Doctrine. Service doctrine, such as the AFDD and AFTTP series, out-lines Service competencies and guides the application of Service forces.

Joint Doctrine. Joint doctrine applies air and space doctrine to joint operations and describes the best way to integrate and employ air and space forces with land and naval forces in military action. Joint doctrine is published in the joint publication system.

Multinational Doctrine. Multinational doctrine applies air and space doctrine to joint multinational operations and describes the best way to It establishes the agreed upon principles, organization, and fundamental procedures between or among allied forces. Commanders of forces operating as part of a multinational (alliance or coalition) military command should follow multinational doctrine and procedures ratified by the United States. For doctrine and procedures not ratified by the United States, commanders should evaluate and follow the multinational command's doctrine and procedures, where applicable. Service, joint, and multinational doctrine is published at the basic, operational, and tactical levels.

The Relationship of Military Doctrine to Strategy

Military doctrine describes how a job should be done to accomplish military goals; strategy defines how it will be done to accomplish national political objectives. Strategy differs fundamentally from doctrine even though each is necessary for employing military forces. *Strategy originates in policy and addresses broad objectives and the plans for achieving them.* Doctrine evolves from military theory and experience and addresses how best to use military power. However, political, economic, or social realities may dictate strategic and operational approaches that depart from accepted doctrine when leaders develop our national security strategy or develop plans for particular contingencies. When this happens, military commanders should delineate for political leaders the military consequences of those adaptations. However, because war is "an instrument of policy," military commanders must ensure that policy governs the employment of military power and be prepared to adapt operations accordingly.

The end of the Cold War transformed US national security requirements. The United States now enters into the twenty-first century with unprecedented prosperity and opportunity that are threatened by dangers of unprecedented complexity. The problems associated with fostering a stable global system will require the US military to play an essential role in building coalitions and shaping the international environment in ways that protect and promote US interests. A *National Security Strategy for a New Century* stresses "the imperative of engagement" through

integrated approaches that allow the nation to **shape** the international environment; **respond** to the full spectrum of crises; and **prepare today** for an uncertain future. This strategy depends not only on maintaining a strong defense and ensuring that America's military forces are ready to deter, fight, and win wars. *A key precept will be that those same forces will be increasingly called upon in peaceful military-to-military contacts, humanitarian intervention, peace support, and other nontraditional roles.*

National Military Strategy. *National Military Strategy of the United States of America describes the objectives, concepts, tasks, and capabilities necessary to implement the goals set for the military in A National Security Strategy for a New Century.* The national military strategy evolves as the inter-national environment, national strategy, and national military objectives change. *This strategy lays the basis for applying military instruments at the strategic and operational levels.* It requires responsive military forces to *cope rapidly and decisively* with diverse situations including:

- Nuclear and Conventional Threats
- Regional Instability
- Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Threats to Unilateral Peace-support Operations
- Drug-trafficking
- Terrorism
- Regional Wars
- Natural Disasters

To execute this national military strategy of flexible and selective engagement, our military forces must not only be trained, organized, and equipped to fight, but must also be ready to engage across the spectrum of peace, crisis, and conflict as part of any joint, combined, United Nations, or interagency force.

Fundamental Nature of War. **Three enduring truths describe the fundamental nature of war.** These are not likely to change, even as technology provides what is often referred to as a “revolution in military affairs.” **War's political nature and the physical stress and agony of combat will outlive our attempts through technological progress and our most fervent desires to make it bloodless and devoid of violence.** The means may change, but the fundamental nature and risks of warfare will remain.

- **War is an instrument of national policy.** *Victory in war is not measured by casualties inflicted, battles won or lost, or territory occupied, but by whether or not political objectives were achieved.* More than any other factor, political objectives (one's own and those of the enemy) shape the scope and intensity of war. Military objectives and operations must support political objectives and must be coordinated and orchestrated with nonmilitary instruments of power.
- **War is a complex and chaotic human endeavor. Human frailty and irrationality shape war's nature.** *Uncertainty and unpredictability—what many call the “fog” of war—combine with danger, physical stress, and human fallibility*

to produce “friction,” a phenomenon that makes apparently simple operations unexpectedly, and sometimes even insurmountably, difficult. Uncertainty, unpredictability, and unreliability are always present, but sound doctrine, leadership, organization, core personal values, technologies, and training can lessen their effects.

- **War is a clash of opposing wills. An enemy can be highly unpredictable.** War is not waged against an inanimate or static object, but against a living, calculating enemy. *Victory results from creating advantages against thinking adversaries bent on creating their own advantages.* This produces a dynamic interplay of action and reaction in which the enemy often acts or reacts unexpectedly. *While physical factors are crucial in war, the national will and the leadership’s will are also critical components of war.* The will to prosecute or the will to resist can be decisive elements.

Air and Space Power in War

The overriding objective of any military force is to be prepared to conduct combat operations in support of national political objectives—to conduct the nation’s wars. War is a struggle between rival political groups or nation states to attain competing political objectives. War does not have to be officially declared for armed forces to be thrust into wartime conditions or engage in combat operations; in fact, the vast majority of military operations are not conducted under the banner of a declared war or even preplanned combat operations. Once political leaders resort to the use of force, or possibly even the threat of force, they may place their forces “at war,” at least from the perspective of those engaged. *War is a multidimensional activity, which can be categorized in various ways: by intensity (low to high); by duration (short or protracted); by the means employed (conventional, unconventional, nuclear); or by the objectives/resources at stake (general or limited war).*

Warfare is normally associated with the different mediums of air, land, sea, and space. *In addition, information is now considered another medium in which some aspects of warfare can be conducted.* The US Air Force conducts air, space, and information warfare to support the objectives of joint force commanders (JFCs). In addition, air and space forces accomplish a wide variety of traditional and information-related functions, classically described as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). *These functions can be conducted independently from land and sea operations and can complement, support, or be supported by, land and sea operations.*

Air and Space Power in Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)

The challenges our armed forces face today are more ambiguous and regionally focused than during the Cold War. These challenges can no longer be described as a single threat (the Soviet Union) but as multiple risks: economic and political transitions, repressive regimes, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, proliferation of cutting-edge military technology, violent extremists, militant nationalism, ethnic and religious conflict, refugee overflows, narcotics trafficking, environmental degradation, rapid population growth, and terrorism. The military instrument of national power, either unilaterally or in combination with the economic and diplomatic instruments, may be called upon to meet these challenges. Under such circumstances, military operations other than war may deter war, resolve conflict, relieve suffering, promote peace, or support civil authorities.

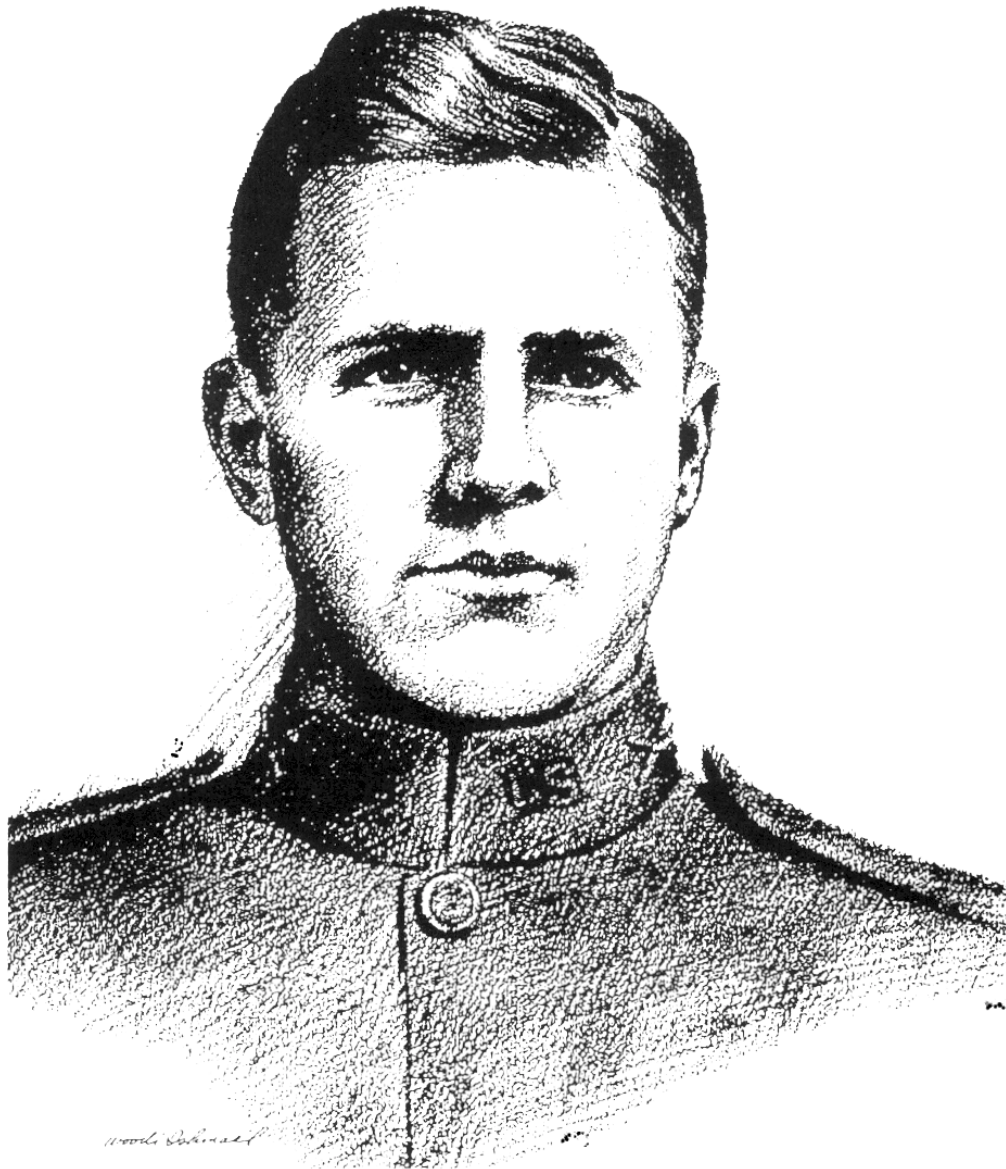
MOOTW Operations MOOTW are military actions not associated with sustained, large-scale combat operations. Application of global strategic air and space forces can still be appropriate and effective, as can the special operations component. Military actions can be applied to:

- **Enforcement of Sanctions**
- **Enforcing**
- **Exclusion Zones**
- **Protection of Shipping**
- **Strikes and Raids**
- **Arms Control Support**
- **Domestic Support Operations**
- **Foreign Humanitarian Assistance**
- **Nation Assistance***
- **Show of Forces**
- **Support to Insurgency***
- **Combating Terrorism**
- **Counterdrug Operations**
- **Ensuring Freedom of Navigation**
- **Noncombatant Evacuation Operations**
- **Peace Operations**
- **Recovery Operations Typical**
- **Combat Operations Typical**
- **Noncombat Operations**

** **Note:** The US reserves the right to use force during NCA-approved support to counter-insurgency (part of nation assistance) and during NCA-approved support to insurgency when it is in its interests to do so. **Caution:** A distinct characteristic of MOOTW is the ever-existing possibility that any type of MOOTW may quickly change from noncombat to combat and vice versa. Therefore, even when a typical combat operation is planned, remember that actual force may not be needed if deterrence works, e.g., protection of shipping. Likewise, in some typical noncombat operations, some level of force may be*

required if the situation deteriorates. Regardless, use of appropriate self-defense measures are always authorized.

MOOTW operations often include specialized equipment and specialized skills. *MOOTW Operations* complement any combination of the other instruments of national or international power. To leverage effectiveness, it is particularly important that actions be integrated, mutually reinforcing, and clearly focused on compatible objectives throughout the engaged force, whether US, allied, military, civilian, or nongovernmental organizations. *The overall goal of MOOTW is to pursue US national policy initiatives and to counter potential threats to US national security interests.* MOOTW may be classified as typically combat, typically noncombat, and a group of operations that may be either combat or non-combat. Even though there are many types of MOOTW typically not involving combat, **airmen must understand that violence (and casualties) may occur in virtually any type of operation** and, therefore, must be ready and able at all times to defend themselves and their units. **Air, space, and information functions are adaptable to MOOTW**, and certain assets may be applied to attain strategic-, operational-, or tactical-level effects against limited objectives as effectively as those mounted against more traditional wartime targets. Whether providing rapid, focused global mobility; supporting information operations that shape and influence the situation; isolating operations from air or ground interference; or providing the eyes and ears of a sophisticated command and control system; the flexibility of air and space forces is integral to any operation. Air and space forces can be the supported force (airlift or special operations to provide foreign humanitarian assistance or to conduct a limited raid; counterair to enforce an air exclusion zone; or information operations to determine treaty compliance), an enhancing force (air- and space-based ISR), or a supporting force (close air support, some interdiction, and some suppression of enemy air defenses [SEAD]). Air and space forces are an essential element in successful MOOTW.



SECOND LIEUTENANT ERWIN RUSSELL BLECKLEY

was a DH-4 observer with the 50th Aero Squadron. On 6 October 1918, near Binarville, France, Lieutenant Bleckley and his pilot were on their second trip to drop supplies to a surrounded battalion in the Argonne Forest. Subjected on the first trip to violent enemy fire, they attempted now to fly still lower in order to deliver the supplies even more precisely. The plan was brought down by enemy ground fire, resulting in fatal wounds to Lieutenant Bleckley who died before he could be taken to a hospital. In the course of this mission, lieutenant Bleckley showed the highest possible devotion to duty, courage, and valor.